

REMARKS

Claims 1-7 are pending. A final Office Action mailed December 22, 2004 objected to Claim 4, rejected Claims 1, 2, and 7 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, and rejected Claims 1-7 under 35 U.S.C. § 103. By way of this Amendment, Applicants hereby cancel Claims 1, 2, and 7, amend Claims 3-5, and 7 and add Claims 8-15. Applicants hereby respectfully request reconsideration of the application.

OBJECTION OF CLAIMS

The Office Action objected to Claim 4. Applicants hereby amend Claim 4 in order to overcome the noted objection.

REJECTION OF CLAIMS UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 112, SECOND PARAGRAPH

The Office Action rejected Claims 1, 2, and 7 as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which Applicants regard as the invention.

Applicants hereby cancel Claims 1, 2, and 7, thereby overcoming the noted rejection.

REJECTION OF CLAIMS UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 103

The Office Action rejected Claims 1-7 as being unpatentable over Brown et al. (hereinafter Brown) in view of Padawer et al. (hereinafter Padawer). The Office Action states that Brown discloses a document signing system having components for displaying an electronic document, identifying blocks of text for a signature task, uniquely identifying blocks of text, assigning users to the uniquely identified blocks of text, allowing review of the assigned blocks of text, and digital signing of the document. The Office Action further states that Brown, a document computer-based system, allows for identifying blocks of text, verifying the correctness of blocks of text, and storing and retrieving of various values. The Office Action states that

Brown does not explicitly disclose selecting a decline option. The Office Action states that Padawer discloses a system in which a user is offered to accept or decline changes in the document. Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify the system of Brown to include a decline option in addition to the acceptance option, in order to allow the system to be customized based on the needs of the individual users. With regard to amended independent Claim 3, Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

Applicants submit that Padawer discloses that when a document is edited or has been changed in some way, the user is prompted whether they want to accept or decline those changes. The type of selection performed by Padawer is not stored, only the accepted or previously accepted changes (in the case where decline edits is selected) to the document are stored. Applicants submit that the acceptance and decline options do not save or decline edits of a document being reviewed. The acceptance and decline options are merely a recordation of an acceptance or decline event for a particular block of text. In other words, does the reviewer accept the text as written or does the reviewer not agree with the text as written.

Applicants submit that Brown discloses identifying to-be-signed portions of a document corresponding to the role of a signer (FIGURE 3, block 310; col. 11, lines 65 - col. 12, line 13). Brown also teaches accepting any edits, or modifications to the identified to-be-signed portions (col. 13, lines 13-21; FIGURE 3, block 316). Applicants submit that Brown is performing an acceptance of any edits or modifications that appear in the portion of the document. Thus, if the viewed edits or modifications were not accepted (or declined), the edits or modifications would not be applied – this allows the signer to review the document and make any required selections or changes for applying a digital signature (col. 13, lines 16-19). Therefore, Applicants submit that Brown fails to teach or suggest that for one or more blocks of unedited text, selecting from a list consisting of: an acceptance option and a decline option.

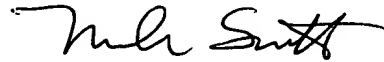
Therefore, Applicants submit that amended independent Claims 3 and 5 are allowable over the cited references. Because Claims 4 and 6 depend from allowable independent claims, they are allowable for the same reasons that make their corresponding independent claims allowable.

CONCLUSION

Applicants respectfully submit that all of the claims of the pending application are now in condition for allowance over the cited references. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the rejections, allowance, and early passage through issuance. If the examiner has any questions, the examiner is invited to contact the Applicant's agent listed below.

Respectfully submitted,

BLACK LOWE & GRAHAM^{PLLC}



Michael Smith
Registration No. 39,563
Dial: 206.381.3300

MAIL CERTIFICATE

I hereby certify that this communication is being deposited with the United States Postal Service via first class mail under 37 C.F.R. § 1.08 on the date indicated below addressed to: MAIL STOP AF, Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450.

5/3/05
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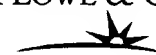
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BLACK LOWE & GRAHAM^{PLLC}



701 Fifth Avenue, Suite 4800
Seattle, Washington 98104
206.381.3300 • F: 206.381.3301